

Docket Item # 10
BAR CASE # 2007-0072

BAR Meeting
May 2, 2007

ISSUE: Demolition/encapsulation
APPLICANT: Larry Hirsch by Stephen Kulinski
LOCATION: 502 Duke Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends denial of the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate.

In the alternative, if the Board recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate staff recommends the following conditions:

1. Large scale 4" x 5" negative black and white record photographs to Historic American Building Survey Standards are to be made of the facade and rear of building as well as interior and exterior of the area to be demolished. These photographs are to be approved by staff prior to the issuance of a building permit. Two sets of these photographs together with the one set of negatives are deposited at both the Special Collections, Alexandria Pubic Library as well as the Alexandria Archives and Record;
2. Measured drawings prepared to Historic American Building Survey Standards of the interior and exterior of the area to be demolished are to be made and approved by staff prior to the issuance of a building permit. The drawings are to be deposited at both the Special Collections, Alexandria Pubic Library as well as the Alexandria Archives and Record; and,
3. Physical design detail elements that are to be removed may be retained by the City of Alexandria to be determined at the discretion of the Director of the Lyceum and deposited in the collections of the Lyceum in consultation with staff of the Department of Planning & Zoning.

(Insert sketch here)

Note: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting a Permit to Demolish and Capsulate several sections of the existing structure in order to allow for the construction of alterations and new additions. The sections that are proposed to be capsulated and demolished include:

- **East wall of existing flounder and rear (south) wall of the main historic block**
A new one story addition will capsulate a portion of this area. An existing window on the second level will be enlarged and converted to a door.
- **East wall of existing flounder**
Portions of this wall will be demolished to allow the installation of a new door and window.
- **Rear (south) wall of the existing flounder ell and rear porch**
The rear porch will be demolished as portions of the rear elevation of the existing flounder to allow construction of a new addition. As well the rear wall of the flounder will be completely encapsulated by the new addition.

II. HISTORY:

The house at 502 Duke Street is a three story rowhouse with a painted brick façade. According to Ethelyn Cox in *Alexandria Street by Street* it dates from the early 19th century. However, by the mid-19th century it had been modernized in the Greek Revival manner similar to a number of other rowhouses on the south side of Duke Street in the 400 and 500 blocks. The exterior of the house is remarkably unaltered.

The Board approved new brick front steps and metal hand rails for this house in 1987 (BAR Case #87-0020, 3/4/87).

III. ANALYSIS:

In considering a Permit to Demolish/Capsulate, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, §10-105(B):

- (1) Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its moving, removing, capsulating or razing would be to the detriment of the public interest?
- (2) Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into a historic house?
- (3) Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?
- (4) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway?
- (5) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?
- (6) Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists and artisans, attracting

new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage, and making the city a more attractive and desirable place in which to live?

In the opinion of Staff, this is an important early 19th residential structure that is significant for its architectural contributions to the patrimony of the historic district and the proposed demolition and capsulation and meets criterion #'s 1, 2, 3, 5 & 6. Staff believes that the proposed demolition represents a significant loss of the early architectural fabric of the historic district. The *Design Guidelines* state: "The Boards actively seek to retain the existing historic fabric of the historic districts and strongly discourage the demolition of any portion of an 18th or early 19th century structure."

The extent of the proposed demolition and capsulation will essentially obliterate the rear flounder ell, generally considered as one of the character defining residential building types in the Alexandria historic district. In addition, staff is concerned about the alterations proposed to the existing historic fabric of the historic structure which will result in the creation of a false sense of the architecture of the building.

Therefore, staff recommends that the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate be denied.

In the alternative, if the Board approves the proposed demolition, staff believes that this is such an important structure that the section to be demolished and capsulated should be recorded both by photographs and measured drawings to the standards of the Historic American Building Survey. The recordation must be approved by staff prior to the issuance of a demolition or building permit. Two copies of such recordation must be approved and deposited at the Local History Collections of the Alexandria Public Library and at the City of Alexandria Archives.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends denial of the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate.

In the alternative, if the Board recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish and Capsulate staff recommends the following conditions:

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Planning & Zoning.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F- finding

Code Enforcement:

C-1 Prior to the issuance of a demolition permit or land disturbance permit, a rodent abatement plan shall be submitted to Code Enforcement that will outline the steps that will taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.

Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.